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BASIC NUTRITION CONCEPTS--THEIR USE IN PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION

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In the last issue of NPN, we published the concepts formulated by the ICNE. This issue presents ways to use these concepts in school programs at the State and local levels. The concepts are listed below for the convenience of our readers.

CONCEPTS

1. Nutrition is the food you eat and how the body uses it.
 - We eat food to live, to grow, to keep healthy and well, and to get energy for work and play.
2. Food is made up of different nutrients needed for growth and health.
 - All nutrients needed by the body are available through food.
 - Many kinds and combinations of food can lead to a well-balanced diet.
 - No food, by itself, has all the nutrients needed for full growth and health.
 - Each nutrient has specific uses in the body.
 - Most nutrients do their best work in the body when teamed with other nutrients.
3. All persons, throughout life, have need for the same nutrients, but in varying amounts.
 - The amounts of nutrients needed are influenced by age, sex, size, activity, and state of health.
 - Suggestions for the kinds and amounts of food needed are made by trained scientists.
4. The way food is handled influences the amount of nutrients in food, its safety, appearance, and taste.
 - Handling means everything that happens to food while it is being grown, processed, stored, and prepared for eating.

Our objective in conducting nutrition education and nutrition research is the ultimate nutritional health of everyone. Since we do not expect everyone to become nutrition specialists, we must decide how much of what we know is really basic to the development and maintenance of desirable food habits.

Need for consensus

Nutrition workers recognize that the public gets its information from many sources in the community. Some are authoritative; some are not. The result is the "man-in-the-street" is literally bombarded with information that he is often ill-equipped to evaluate.

If reliable nutritionists and workers in allied professions could coordinate their approaches to nutrition education, they could achieve some consensus. Individual programs would be strengthened and some confusion prevented. The formulation of basic concepts of nutrition is an attempt toward coordination.

Need for good communication

Concepts are not taught per se—they are the basic ideas to be developed. They constitute the skeleton of the overall program. Individually, concepts about nutrition become the take-off points for lessons, workshops, conferences, or single presentations.

Why then formulate concepts in lay language?

Even the well grounded, sincere scientist can cause confusion by his choice of scientific language in communicating his "basic ideas." Very often something essential is lost or something misleading is added before the information actually reaches the public.

Starting points for teaching

The members of the Interagency Committee on Nutrition Education hoped to improve communication with the public by formulating in simple language what they believe to be the "basic ideas" of nutrition. These state-

ments are starting points for teaching. The same language will run through the teaching of various community groups that touch on nutrition. This coordination, too, may tend to reduce confusion.

We are not suggesting new or different program objectives, subject matter, or activities. We are instead proposing the grouping of our information around four broad ideas. We believe everyone—nutritionist and consumer—should share these concepts.

In other issues of Nutrition Program News and earlier in Nutrition Committee News, we have described:

1. School nutrition programs that had proved to be effective, such as those in PS 105 and PS 165, New York City (May-June 1960).

2. Activities that appeared to be promising as a means of developing basic understanding of nutrition in school children (July-Aug. 1959; Mar.-Apr. 1960).

In this issue we will indicate how the concepts of nutrition can provide guidelines for planning school programs and for the use of such activities.

CONCEPTS—GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Nutrition workers are increasingly concerned about the potential of school programs that present the same facts in the same way in each grade. Primary grade children are taught the names of nutrients, their functions, and good food sources of each. Children who memorize do not necessarily understand these facts. Some can recite the names of the nutrients from memory, when it would be better if they could recognize and report the foods they eat.

It is a poor practice to present these facts too early. Primary children have no use for nutrition facts in their daily lives because they do not choose food combinations for themselves. By the time they could understand, they are too bored to listen.

How can we use these concepts in planning a program that has a potential for promoting behavioral changes in eating habits where these changes are needed?

Primary grades

In the primary grades we are concerned with developing readiness for learning in many areas. Nutrition should be one of those areas. The first concept is the one that should be developed here: "We eat food to live, to grow, to keep healthy and to get energy for work and play."

If we are going to teach nutrition in terms of the food we eat and the use the body makes of it, we must start with food. Children should be able to identify and report the foods they eat. They should learn to eat and enjoy

the wide variety of foods available to them. The primary grades are the place for tasting parties and identification games. Sometimes a whole semester can be well spent helping children develop a taste for a nutritious fruit or vegetable. Short field trips to local outlets—such as dairies, bakeries, and produce markets—extend the information children have about food.

School lunch participation provides repeated opportunity for developing good food habits. A wholesome, positive attitude of the teacher toward the school lunch program helps to make the experience a more meaningful one. With guidance and encouragement, children can widen their acquaintance with foods.

Science experiences in the care and handling of small animals teach the relationship of food to health and growth of the animal. A series of such experiences illustrates the relationship of health to kind as well as amount of food. Children can also learn that different animals have different food needs.

By the end of the primary grades, children should:

1. Be able to identify and report the foods they eat.
2. Eat a variety of foods with enjoyment.
3. Know the relationship between food, growth, and health, including dental health.
4. Eat well in the school lunchroom in the company of other children.

Middle grades

In the middle grades, activities can be selected to start developing the second concept: "Food is made up of different nutrients needed for growth and health."

Well-planned animal- and plant-growing projects allow children to see this concept for themselves. For example, a good guinea pig project makes a fine springboard for developing an understanding of vitamin C. Animal projects require consultant help from someone with a comprehensive background in nutrition.

Planning a series of breakfasts typical of the countries studied in social science classes will help children to understand that many kinds and combinations of food can lead to a good diet.

For example, grain products in some form usually are a part of the breakfast of most children around the world. In some countries, the grain is rice; in others, it may be wheat used as a cereal, as some sort of bread, or as some type of pancake. In still others, it may be soybean grits or cornmeal mush. The preparation of a typical breakfast emphasizes the many foods that are available to combine with the grain product to make a balanced meal.

In schools where many children either get breakfast for themselves or come to school without breakfast, a project on planning and preparing simple meals serves a prac-

tical purpose. Such a project also makes a good starting point for developing an understanding of food energy, the B vitamins, and minerals.

These are but a few examples of how the what-to-teach can be accomplished. By the end of the middle grades, children should:

1. Have a deeper understanding of the relationship between food, health, and growth.
2. Understand that all nutrients are available through food.
3. Identify nutrients and recognize that each has specific functions in the body. (An ability to recite a comprehensive list of functions is not the purpose here.)
4. Use a food guide to make desirable food choices.

Secondary schools

In secondary schools, nutrition can be taught through various subject matter areas—home economics, science, health, social sciences. Information and activities can be selected to develop or expand each of the concepts.

For example, because students in the secondary school have more freedom of choice in selecting what they will eat, an added emphasis should be given here to the relationship between food intake and energy output. This is important to the full development of the following concepts: "We eat food to live, to grow, to keep healthy and well, and to get energy for work and play." and "All persons throughout life have need for the same nutrients but in varying amounts."

Understanding the relationship between food intake and energy output can help to promote good nutritional health and prevent obesity.

Coordination

We can formulate statements that indicate what to teach. But if we do not organize a program and plan for coordination, our efforts are often lost under the heading of "incidental teaching."

Nutrition workers and school personnel have found that an active school health committee with nutrition represented on it is an effective way of coordinating nutrition in its proper context into a broad school health program.

CONCEPTS—GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION

If good nutrition programs are to result, we must frequently examine progress toward our objectives and modify procedures as needed.

In long-term nutrition programs, we are interested in developing wholesome attitudes toward food and toward nutrition as it relates to health, good eating habits, and a fund of accurate information pertinent to people's needs.

The concepts listed on page 1 can be used as starting points for evaluation of any nutrition program. Have the participants achieved an understanding of nutrition? Is this understanding reflected in attitudes and eating habits?

In short-term nutrition programs, we may have one specific objective. To evaluate it, we must start with one appropriate concept.

NEXT STEP—REPORTS OF WAYS CONCEPTS ARE USED

The ICNE members who formulated these concepts do not consider the job done. Their next step is to investigate the usefulness of the statements. Committee members hope that our readers working in nutrition programs for all age groups will cooperate with those in other programs to put these concepts in action, and will forward to us descriptions of successful activities. We will, in turn, report such efforts in later issues of NPN.

The ICNE is exploring methods of implementing the use of the concepts with the help of nutrition workers in the field. From this cooperative enterprise, we hope to get direction for promoting improved communication and coordination leading to improved program planning, evaluation, and effectiveness.

NUTRITION SCIENCE AND YOU

Dr. Olaf Mickelsen, Professor of Nutrition at the University of Michigan, has written a fascinating story of nutrition as a science. The book was produced under the sponsorship of the National Science Teachers Association and the Agricultural Research Service, USDA. It has the endorsement of the Interagency Committee on Nutrition Education.

"Nutrition Science and You" is one of a series of paperbacks—the Vistas of Science series—prepared as supplemental reading in secondary schools. The purpose is to acquaint boys and girls with nutrition as an area of science that offers many opportunities for interesting and rewarding careers.

The book will be distributed to schools all over the country by Scholastic Book Services, the publisher. We believe nutrition workers will find it useful in planning local recruitment activities. Single copies are 50 cents. They may be ordered from Scholastic Book Services, Scholastic Magazines, Inc., New York, N. Y. Quantity prices are available on request.

MATERIALS

Listing of these materials is for the information of the reader and does not necessarily mean recommendation. Materials or information concerning materials may be obtained from the address given.

Nutrition

Recommended Dietary Allowances, Sixth Revised Edition, 1964. A report of the Food and Nutrition Board, National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council. Publication 1146. 60 pp. Available from the Printing and Publishing Office, National Academy of Sciences, 2101 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20418. \$1.00.

Applied Nutrition

Food and Nutrition. A series of articles on nutrition for school children written by nutritionists for the Grade Teacher Magazine, September 1964. Reprints are available from Reprint Department, Grade Teacher, Leroy Avenue, Darien, Conn. Single copies, 15 cents; 20 or more copies, 10 cents each.

The food you eat and heart disease. Revised 1963. 12 pp. Public Health Service Publication No. 537. Health Information Series No. 89. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Available from the Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. 10 cents.

Guide to serving modified diets in a nursing home. Clare Van Natta, 1964. 40 pp. State Department of Health, Olympia, Wash.

Rhode Island Diet Guide. Compiled by Rhode Island Department of Health in cooperation with Rhode Island Dietetic Association, Rhode Island Department of Social Welfare, Nutrition Council of Rhode Island, and the advice of Rhode Island Medical Society. June 1964. 111 pp. Available from any of the above listed agencies, all located in Providence, R. I.

Feeding Your Child from 3 to 6—In Day-care Centers. 19 pp. Missouri Home Economics Association, Division of Health, Division of Welfare. Available from 669 South Florence St., Springfield, Mo.

The Road to Good Health. (Nutrition guide and cookbook) 1964. 44 pp. Eula Schwartz Marsh, Margaret Fuller Hill, Catherine Cesar, Juliet Jewett Parker. Available from the Yakima Home Economics Association, Yakima, Wash. 98901. Single copies, \$2.00; 25 or more copies, \$1.30 each.

Consumer Information

A Guide to Budgeting for the Young Couple. 1964. 16 pp. Home and Garden Bulletin No. 98. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Single copies free from Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Also available from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. 10 cents.

Packet for the Bride. Collection of consumer service materials. Single packets available free for brides from the U. S. Department of Agriculture at the above address. Quantity packets available from the Superintendent of Documents at the above address. \$1.50 each.